DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 115 196 HE 007 101

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TITLE Personal and Institutional Data of Institutional Research Activities and Products at Predominantly Black Institutions.
PUB DATE May 74
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research (May, 1974)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Data Analysis; *Data Processing; Decisionmaking; Educational Accountability; *Higher Education; Information Systems; *Institutional Research; Management Development; *Negro Colleges

ABSTRACT

Recent trends indicate the increasing concern regarding the broad issue of accountability at institutions of higher education. Because of this, colleges and universities are being forced more and more to base their decisions on hard fact instead of intuition. The institutional research function is instrumental in assisting in this kind of data collection and analysis. To determine the extent to which predominantly Black colleges were fulfilling this function, a questionnaire was devised to solicit information regarding institutional activities and products at the predominantly Black colleges. An assessment of the institutional research activities and products at these colleges suggest that the growing complexities of management and the societal pressures for a greater degree of accountability in the last two decades serves as a mandate and as an impetus to organize and synthesize data that supports the existence of these insitutions. This trend is in keeping with the national and local questions raised as to the quality and legitimacy of higher education in general. (Author/KE)

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PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DATA OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS AT PREDOMINANTLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Recent trends indicate the increasing concern regarding the broad issue of accountability at institutions of higher education. Because of this, colleges and universities are being forced more and more to base their decisions on hard fact instead of intuition. The institutional research function is instrumental in assisting in this kind of data collection and analysis. To determine the extent to which predominantly Black colleges were fulfilling this function, this study was undertaken.

The study not only assesses and summarizes the institutional research activities and products at the predominantly Black colleges, but suggests pertinent implications based on the findings.

PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DATA OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS AT PREDOMINANTLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS

B. Vivian Burghardt, Bowie State College

Introduction

In a 1970 study, William Garner[1] suggested that institutional research as an integral function in the administration of colleges and universities is in its early stages of development and that only scattered examples of what is currently referred to as "institutional research" were in existence in any formalized and structured fashion prior to World War II.

In the last nineteen years, however, institutional research has evolved at a rapidly increasing rate as a formalized function at colleges and universities. Rourke and Brooks[2] report that only fifteen institutions had offices for institutional research in 1955, but by 1964 there were 115 such offices. This study reveals, however, that by 1973 there were approximately 1,000. This data was based on the review of the titles of 994 members of the Association of Institutional Research in its 1973-'74 Directory. Of the 994 AIR members, thirty-eight of these members represented twenty-

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[1]W. H. Garner, A Systematic Approach to the Establishment of an Office of Institutional Research in a Small University: An Exploratory Study. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Michigan State University Microfilms, 1970.

[2]Francis E. Rourke and Glenn E. Brooks, The Managerial Revolution in Higher Education. Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins Press, 1966, p. 30.

eight predominantly Black colleges.

The growing complexity of governing institutions of higher education has contributed in large measure to the rise of institutional research. More and more, college and university administrations are being forced to base their decisions on hard fact instead of intuition. The system of administration--based on the collegial authority of administrators, faculty, and to a growing extent, students--required that empirical facts and information be available as a data base for effective decision-making. The institutional research function is instrumental in assisting in this kind of data collection and analysis. To determine the extent to which the predominantly Black colleges were fulfilling this function, this study was initiated.

Methodology

A questionnaire was devised to solicit information regarding institutional activities and products at the predominantly Black colleges. This instrument was designed specifically to cover the following areas: (1) certain demographic information; (2) operational status of institutional research offices; (3) professional and supportive staffs; (4) budgets and primary sources of funding; (5) types and numbers of studies; (6) initiative for studies; and (7) the degree of support exercised in interpreting the results of these studies.

The questionnaire with a cover letter to the respective presidents was mailed in November 1973 to 111 predominantly Black colleges and universities. The questionnaires were mailed to the presidents with the request that these be forwarded to the institutional research offices and in the absence of such offices, to the campus office responsible for generating such information. Finally, it was requested further that the completed questionnaires be returned within a period of four weeks. No follow-up requests were sent.

At the end of a six-week period, of the 111 contacts made, there were sixty-one responses (55.0%). Of these sixty-one responses, only fifty-eight or 52.3% were in usable form. It is this 52.3% response which provides the basis for the findings of this study.[3]

Results of the Analysis

The fifty-eight responses represented fifty-eight different schools and provided the following demographic information: (1) type of control--public, 29 (50.0%) and private, 29 (50.0%); (2) type of institution--junior/community college, 12 (20.7%), university, 14 (24.1%), four-year college, 31 (53.4%), and six-year college, 1 (1.7%); (3) enrollment--

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[3]The responses from the twelve junior/community colleges (20.7%) will be incorporated in the study, but there will be no attempt to compare these two-year colleges with the four-year colleges for the following reason: only four of the twelve schools had established institutional research offices, with two of these having full-time directors, and the other two, part-time directors.

less than 1,000, 17 (29.3%), 1,000 to 1,999, 16 (27.6%), 2,000 to 4,999, 19 (32.8%), and 5,000 to 10,000, 6 (10.3%).

Of the fifty-eight schools polled, thirty-seven or 63.8% had full-time institutional research offices; six or 10.3% had part-time offices. The fifteen schools with no offices constituted 25.8% of the total number of schools responding.

The forty-three predominantly Black schools reporting institutional research offices had the following characteristics:

1. These offices have been operational from one to eighteen years with an average of 4.67 years.

2. Thirty-seven of the institutions reported having sixty-six full-time professionals and twelve offices reported fifteen part-time professionals. The range for full-time professionals was zero to eight with a 1.57 average; the range for part-time professionals was zero to two with a 0.36 average.

3. The full-time supportive staffs had a range of zero to four with an average of 0.95 persons; the part-time supportive staff, a range of zero to four with an average of 0.96 persons.

4. Thirty-five or 81.4% reported full-time directors, and the remaining eight (18.6%) part-time directors.

5. The greatest majority of institutional research directors (twenty-six or 60.5%) reported directly to the President or Chancellor followed by eleven or 25.6% who reported directly to the Vice President or Vice Chancellor. Five (11.6%) reported directly to the Academic Dean, and only one (2.3%) to the Development Officer.

6. Of the forty-three schools reporting, thirty-six (83.7%) had line item budgets. Only seven or 16.3% had no specific allocated budget.

7. The primary source of funding for nineteen offices (44.2%) was Federal funds; ten offices (23.3%), State funds, and the remaining fourteen (32.5%), a combination of various sources.

The fifteen predominantly Black schools reporting no formal institutional research offices had the following characteristics:

1. Eight (53.3%) of these fifteen schools had offices or units responsible primarily for institutional studies.

2. The names of offices or units handling institutional studies were varied. They included the following: Development, Operations Analysis and Research, Admissions, Institutional Studies, Planning, and Self-Study. Six schools or 40.0% did not respond to this item.

3. Seven of these schools reported full-time professionals; four reported part-time professionals; two reported full-time and part-time professionals, and six (40.0%) did not respond. The range of full-time professionals was zero to four with an average of 1.57; the part-time range was zero to four with a 0.89 average.

4. The full-time supportive staffs ranged from zero to three with an average of 1.11 persons; the part-time supportive staffs ranged from zero to three with a 1.56 average.

5. In order of priority, these offices reported directly to the President, Vice President, and Academic Dean. There was a 40% non-response in this area.

6. The greatest majority of these schools (66.7%) had no annual research budget. Two schools reported annual budgets, with three schools not responding.

7. The primary source of funding was 20% Federal, 20% State, and 26.7% from various other sources. 33.3% of the schools did not indicate their primary sources.

Institutional Research Activities

Beginning January, 1972 through December, 1972, the fifty-eight schools responding reported the following types of studies initiated, completed, or in progress: policy studies, 105 (22.9%); operational studies, 115 (25.1%); outcome studies, 94 (20.5%); and descriptive studies, 144 (31.4%) for a total of 458 studies.

The total number of studies cannot be given accurately as respondents were asked to indicate the total number of each kind of report undertaken: some followed instructions while others simply checked the type of study. To assure consistency in reporting, each of the twenty-four categories of types of studies was counted as one. (The actual count of studies of those responding exceeded 1,000.)

The percentage of total studies in each category reflects great diversity at the predominantly Black colleges. The specific studies which had the highest percentage of frequency were (1) institutional long-range planning; (2) enrollment projections or enrollment sources; (3) space utilization and/or needs; (4) program or curriculum evaluation (individual curricula); (5) student follow-up studies; and (6) faculty characteristics, faculty load, student-teacher ratio, or class size.

Only three studies received less than 10% of the total studies in each category. They were (1) management by objectives; (2) devising simulation models of institutional

dynamics; and (3) effectiveness of media, materials, or methods.

Institutional Research Products: Initiative

It is thought that initiative for studies and the degree of advocacy exercised in interpreting findings may influence decisions made differently, depending on the type of study. Initiative here means whether the study is typically originated by an institutional research office or unit, as opposed to being a response to some other authority. Advocacy means that the conclusions drawn are clearly related to the interests of those who will be affected by decisions.

1. The greatest amounts of initiative exercised by the institutional research offices were in the areas of evaluative and descriptive studies, 48.3% and 60.3% respectively. Initiative for operational studies was 39.7%; for policy studies, 27.6%; and for all studies, 29.3%.

2. The percentage range for types of studies not originating from the institutional research office was 13.8% to 39.7%; the percentage range for "no responses" was 25.9% to 36.2%.

3. The advocacy (or supportive) position was most usual in policy and operational studies, 56.9% and 51.7% respectively. In all studies the "no response" percentages pertaining to advocacy position was extremely high--34.5% to 46.6%.

4. Of the respondents reporting, 30.8% stated that their studies were more than 50% effective in influencing decisions. Only 6.9% reported being ineffectual. Approximately 40% did not respond to the question.

5. The offices represented most often when the advocacy position is usual is that of the President (29.3%) followed by the President and Academic Dean (15.5%).

Conclusions and Implications

Following the trend of rapidly increasing the rate of establishing formal and structured offices for institutional research at institutions of higher education, the predominantly Black colleges and universities are making tremendous strides. The reasons for this are not know specifically but it is safe to assume that the growing complexities of management and the societal pressures for a greater degree of accountability in the last two decades served as a mandate and as an impetus to organize and synthesize data which supports the existence of these institutions. This trend, too, is in keeping with the national and local questions raised as to the quality and legitimacy of higher education in general.

The significance of the institutional research offices at the respective schools can be determined in part by noting the offices to which they report. At schools which indicated an established office, the greatest majority reported to major offices. Schools with small populations tended to report directly to the President; schools with large populations tended to report to Vice-Presidents. This system of reporting to chief administrative offices is a positive trend and must be fostered if institutional research is to continue as a viable, evaluative, analytical, and interpretative force.

Even though the established institutional research office is gaining in growth and in significance at the predominantly Black colleges and universities, it is significant to note the primary funding source. Offices with Federal funding as a primary source almost doubles the number of offices with State funding as a primary source. It appears expedient and necessary that these offices continue to be so effective as an integral part of the insitution that Presidents and Chancellors will exert every effort to make these positions State line budget items.

Finally, the great number of studies undertaken indicates the tremendous amount of work produced, but the 29.3 percentage of self-initiated office studies appears low. As offices which supply information requisite to management and to decision-making, studies must be self-initiated on current trends which affect education and society as a whole. To add continually to the significance and credibility of these offices, institutional research directors must be able to anticipate needed information and to supply most of this information before it is requested by superior officers.

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APPENDIX A

RESULTS OF PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DATA OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS AT PREDOMINANTLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS

PART I: Personal and Institutional Data: Schools with Formal Institutional Research Offices, 43; without, 15. N = 58.

	NUMBER	PERCENT
1. Type of Control:		
Public	29	50.0%
Private	29	50.0%
2. Type of Institution:		
Junior/Community College	12	20.7%
University	14	24.1%
Four-Year College	31	53.4%
Other (Six-Year College)	1	1.7%
3. Enrollment, Fall Term 1973 (Headcount):		
Less than 1,000	17	29.3%
1,000 to 1,999	16	27.6%
2,000 to 4,999	19	32.8%
5,000 to 10,000	6	10.3%
Over 10,000	0	0.0%
4. Do you have an Office of Institutional Research:		
Yes, Full-Time	37	63.8%
Yes, Part-Time	6	10.3%
No	15	25.8%

PART II: Personal and Institutional Data: Schools with Formal Institutional Research Offices.

If Yes: N = 43

1. Number of Years Offices have been Operational:		
Less than One Year	10	23.3%
One to Eighteen Years	33	76.7%
2. Number of Offices Reporting Professionals Working:		
Full-Time Only	30	69.8%
Part-Time Only	5	11.6%
Full-Time and Part-Time	7	16.3%
No Response	1	2.3%

	NUMBER	PERCENT
3. Number of Offices Reporting Supportive Staff Working:		
Full-Time Only	21	48.8%
Part-Time Only	12	27.9%
Full-Time and Part-Time	8	18.6%
No Response	2	4.7%
4. Number of Directors:		
Full-Time	35	81.4%
Part-Time	8	18.6%
5. Major Officer to whom the Director Reports:		
Chancellor or President	26	60.5%
Vice Chancellor or Vice President	11	25.6%
Academic Dean	5	11.6%
Development Officer	1	2.3%
6. Number of Offices with Annual Research Budget:		
Yes	36	83.7%
No	7	16.3%
7. Primary Source of Funding:		
Federal	19	44.2%
State	10	23.3%
Local College Funds	8	18.6%
Tuition and Fees	1	2.3%
Church	1	2.3%
Federal and Private	1	2.3%
Federal and State	3	7.0%

If No: N = 15 (Schools without Formal Institutional Research Offices.)

1. Office or Unit (other than Institutional Research Office) Primarily Responsible for Institutional Studies:		
Yes	8	53.3%
No	7	46.7%
2. Name of Office or Unit:		
Development Office	4	26.7%
Operations Analysis and Research	1	6.7%
Admissions	1	6.7%
Institutional Studies	1	6.7%
Planning Office	1	6.7%
Self-Study Office	1	6.7%
No Response	6	40.0%

	NUMBER	PERCENT
3. Number of Professionals Working:		
Full-Time Only	5	33.3%
Part-Time Only	2	13.3%
Full-Time and Part-Time	2	13.3%
No Response	6	40.0%
4. Number of Supportive Staff Working:		
Full-Time Only	3	20.0%
Part-Time Only	4	26.7%
Full-Time and Part-Time	2	13.3%
No Response	6	40.0%
5. Major Officer to whom the Unit Reports:		
President	6	40.0%
Vice President	2	13.3%
Academic Dean	1	6.7%
No Response	6	40.0%
6. Annual Research Budget:		
Yes	2	13.3%
No	10	66.7%
No Response	3	20.0%
7. Primary Source of Funding:		
Federal	3	20.0%
State	3	20.0%
Private	1	6.7%
Tuition, Grants, and Church	2	13.3%
Institutional	1	6.7%
No Response	5	33.3%

PART III: Personal and Institutional Data: Institutional Research Activities. N = 58

TYPES OF STUDIES

A. Policy Studies		
1. Analysis of economic and/or social conditions affecting institution	14	13.3%
2. Institutional goal-setting	20	19.0%
3. Institutional long-range planning	28	26.7%
4. Inter-institutional comparisons and/or cooperation	15	14.3%
5. Organizational structure and/or functioning	20	19.0%

		NUMBER	PERCENT
6.	Management by objectives	8	7.6%
	Total	105	22.9%
B.	Operational Relationships		
1.	Cost-effectiveness studies	19	16.5%
2.	Devising simulation models of institutional dynamics	7	6.1%
3.	Enrollment projections or enrollment sources	29	25.2%
4.	Planning near term alternatives for program development or resource allocation	14	12.2%
5.	Space utilization and/or needs	31	27.0%
6.	Strategies to increase income or effective funds utilization	15	13.0%
	Total	115	25.1%
C.	Outcomes or Evaluation Studies		
1.	Academic accreditation or multi-program mission achievement	14	14.9%
2.	Effectiveness of media, materials, or methods	6	6.4%
3.	Program or curriculum evaluation (individual curricula)	22	23.4%
4.	Student success or failure (academic achievement)	19	20.2%
5.	Student follow-up studies	23	24.5%
6.	Teaching effectiveness	10	10.6%
	Total	94	20.5%
D.	Descriptive Studies		
1.	Descriptions of applications, attrition, graduations, or the equivalent	26	18.1%
2.	Faculty characteristics, faculty load, student-teacher ratio, or class size	34	23.6%
3.	Information supporting the budgeting process	17	11.8%

	NUMBER	PERCENT
4. Opinion samplings	17	11.8%
5. Student characteristics profiles	30	20.8%
6. Salary/fringe benefit studies	20	13.9%
Total	144	31.4%

PART IV: Institutional Research Products: Initiative. N = 58

Type of Study	Initiative Usually From I. R. Office		Advocacy Position Is Usual		Usually Effective In Influencing Decisions	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All Studies						
Yes	17	29.3%	22	37.9%	33	56.9%
No	23	39.7%	12	20.7%	4	6.9%
No Response	18	31.0%	24	41.4%	21	36.2%
Policy Studies						
Yes	16	27.6%	33	56.9%	31	53.4%
No	21	36.2%	5	8.6%	4	6.9%
No Response	21	36.2%	20	34.5%	23	39.7%
Operational Studies						
Yes	23	39.7%	30	51.7%	31	53.4%
No	15	25.9%	5	8.6%	4	6.9%
No Response	20	34.5%	23	39.7%	23	39.7%
Evaluation Studies						
Yes	28	48.3%	23	39.7%	29	50.0%
No	10	17.2%	8	13.8%	4	6.9%
No Response	20	34.5%	27	46.6%	25	43.1%
Descriptive Studies						
Yes	35	60.3%	20	34.5%	30	51.7%
No	8	13.8%	13	22.4%	4	6.9%
No Response	15	25.9%	25	43.1%	24	41.4%

Office most often represented when the advocacy position is usual: N = 58.

	NUMBER	PERCENT
President	17	29.3%
Vice President	2	3.5%
Dean of Faculty	2	3.5%
Academic Dean	6	10.3%
President and Academic Dean	9	15.5%
Administrative and Academic Councils	4	6.9%
Development Officer	1	1.7%
Business Manager	1	1.7%
Institutional Research Office	1	1.7%
No Response	15	25.9%

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

1. Alabama Lutheran Academy--Alabama
2. Alabama State University--Alabama
3. Alcorn A & M College--Mississippi
4. Barber-Scotia College--North Carolina
5. Benedict College--South Carolina
6. Bennett College--North Carolina
7. Bethune-Cookman College--Florida
8. Bishop State Junior College--Alabama
9. Bowie State College--Maryland
10. Central State University--Ohio
11. Cheyney State College--Pennsylvania
12. Clark College--Georgia
13. Coahoma Junior College--Mississippi
14. Coppin State College--Maryland
15. Dillard University--Louisiana
16. Elizabeth City State University--North Carolina
17. Fisk University--Tennessee
18. Florida A & M University--Florida
19. Florida Memorial College--Florida
20. Grambling College--Louisiana
21. Hampton Institute--Virginia
22. Howard University--Washington, D. C.
23. Jackson State College--Mississippi
24. Jarvis Christian College--Texas

25. Kentucky State College--Kentucky
26. Kittrell College--North Carolina
27. Knoxville College--Tennessee
28. LeMoyne-Owen College--Tennessee
29. Lincoln University--Missouri
30. Mary Holmes College--Mississippi
31. Morehouse College--Georgia
32. Morgan State College--Maryland
33. Morris Brown College--Georgia
34. Morristown College--Tennessee
35. Natchez Junior College--Mississippi
36. Norfolk State College--Virginia
37. North Carolina A & T State University--North Carolina
38. North Carolina Central University--North Carolina
39. Paine College--Georgia
40. Paul Quinn College--Texas
41. Rust College--Mississippi
42. Shaw University--North Carolina
43. South Carolina State College--South Carolina
44. Southern University (New Orleans)--Louisiana
45. Southern University (Shreveport)--Louisiana
46. Spelman College--Georgia
47. St. Augustine's College--North Carolina
48. Stillman College--Alabama
49. T. A. Lawson Junior College--Alabama
50. Tennessee State University--Tennessee
51. Texas Southern University--Texas

52. The Virginia College--Virginia

53. Tuskegee Institute--Alabama

54. Tyler Junior College--Texas

55. University of Maryland (Eastern Shore)--Maryland

56. Utica Junior College--Mississippi

57. Virginia State College--Virginia

58. Washington Technical Institute--Washington, D. C.

59. Wilberforce University--Ohio

60. Wiley College--Texas

61. Winston-Salem State University--North Carolina